

BIG NEWS



WINTER 2020

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MATCH PROFILE: LITTLE SISTER VAL & BIG SISTER DAWN



Left: Little Sister Val & Big Sister Dawn at Match Intro Meeting in June 2017

Right: Little Sister Val & Big Sister Dawn at Paint Night in July 2019

“Everything we do and every conversation we have is special” - Little Sister Val

Big Sister Dawn and Little Sister Val have been matched for two and a half years. When first matched, Val was a very shy 11 year old. Today, she is a 13 year old young lady who has become more confident and secure in herself.

Val said, “Dawn is a great Big Sister because she really listens to me and I know I can fully trust her. Since being matched with Dawn as my Big Sister I don’t feel so alone anymore”.

Dawn added, “It has been amazing to see how Val has transformed over our time together. She is becoming more secure and I’ve watched her develop a stronger sense of self.”

In addition to being there for Val as someone she can trust and turn to, Dawn is committed to helping Val experience new things and broadening her horizons.

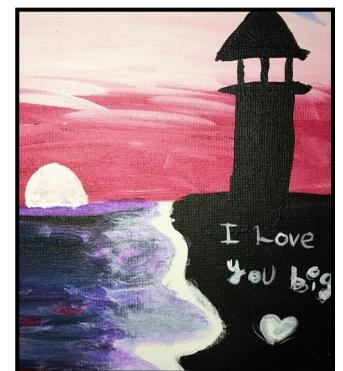
Since being matched, they have done a variety of things on their outings which have included volunteering at a pumpkin patch, learning about marine life at the Long Island Aquarium and just last month they enjoyed a performance of the Philharmonic at Lincoln Center. Dawn also makes an effort to expand Val’s understanding of important life skills not necessarily covered in school, like learning the value of money and how to make wise spending decisions.

One of the many ways Dawn has had a positive impact on Val’s life has been helping her tackle anxiety. “My relationship with Dawn is different from other adults in my life because I know I can count on her not to ever judge me,” shared Val.

Val went on to say, “I feel I would not be who I am today if I didn’t have Dawn as my Big Sister. I am a lot more open to things and I can talk to people now without being so shy.”

When asked if there has been something that has surprised Dawn about being a Big Sister she said, “I guess I didn’t realize how much we would mean to each other and the strong commitment we would both come to share in regards to our relationship.”

Dawn has a reminder of what she means to Val hanging on her wall. This past summer, the two attended a BBBSLI paint night match activity. After completing their artistic masterpieces, Bigs and Littles were encouraged to exchange canvases. Before giving it to Dawn, Val added something special to her painting. In the lower right corner it said “I Love You Big.”



Above: Photo of the painting with Val’s special message to Dawn



Winter 2020

bbbsli.org



On October 3rd, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI) raised more than \$200,000 in support of mentoring at their Annual Big Benefit Gala at The Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, NY. This year's event honored Anil Kapoor, President & CEO, SVAM International, Inc.; Liz Meyers, Executive Vice President of Purchasing & Global Sourcing, Darby Dental Supply, LLC and Dr. David Weissberg, President, Long Island Orthopedic Solutions for their service and support to BBBSLI. As the agency's marquee fundraiser, the Big Benefit Gala raises funds in support of the agency's mission to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth across Long Island.



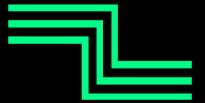

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL


On Saturday, October 19th, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI) hosted its annual Family Fall Festival at Wantagh State Park. The event co-sponsored by GEICO Cares & Northwell Health Katz Institute & Safe Kids Coalition brought together Bigs, Littles and their families for a fun-filled day of food, music, games, field sports, art, face painting and other activities.





Winter Blast



On January 25th, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI) hosted its annual Winter Blast match event presented by GEICO Cares at Dave & Busters in Massapequa. The annual event, held in celebration of National Mentoring Month, was attended by over 100 matches of Bigs and Littles who enjoyed a fun-filled day of games, food and raffles.



Networking for a Cause Night



On January 27th, over 120 guests made up of Board Members, President’s Council Members, Bigs, Donors, invited guests and staff came out to enjoy a night of good food, conversation and networking at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island’s (BBBSLI) Networking for a Cause Night, co-sponsored by Cohen, Hoenigmann & Badolato, CPA’s PC and Naka Technologies. The event was held at premiere location Blackstone steakhouse, located in Melville, NY.

The goal of BBBSLI’s Networking for a Cause events is to engage new individuals to learn more about the agency and help them become aware of ways to partner with us. These future partnerships will allow BBBSLI to cast a larger net across Long Island, which in turn will help the agency in recruiting more mentors allowing us to help more children in need.

“I realized a few years ago that the best way I could support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island, at the core level, was to give my time as a mentor,” said BBBSLI Big Brother & President’s Council member, Tom Fazio. “I want to get it across to everyone that being a mentor doesn’t require a huge time commitment or going to extravagant places, sometimes the most important moments happen while talking in the car.”

To learn more about our agency and how you can support us, please contact Director of Development, Corporate & Event Giving, Meredith McCaslin at (516) 731-7880 ext. 232 or mmcaslin@bbbsli.org. To view more photos from the event visit: bbbsli.org/galleries/networking-for-a-cause-jan-2020



SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEVE BELLONE VISITS BBBSLI

Suffolk County Executive, Steve Bellone, accompanied by members of his team, recently visited Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island's (BBBSLI) office and Donation Center located in Islandia, NY. In recognition of January being National Mentoring Month, the visit was an opportunity for County Executive Bellone to learn more about the agency's mentoring programs and to discuss potential partnerships between BBBSLI and other county agencies to recruit more volunteer mentors. The visit also included a tour of the Donation Center, which was established to help BBBSLI become a self-sustaining organization capable of serving more children across Long Island.

"I am always inspired by the work that is going on at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island as they work to foster the next generation of leaders in government, business, the arts and science." said County Executive Bellone. "During National Mentoring Month we are encouraging anyone who can spare a few hours a month to strongly consider getting involved and help make a real difference in a child's life."

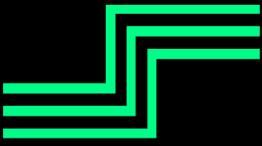
During his visit, County Executive Bellone and his team learned about two new mentoring programs BBBSLI will be launching this year. The "Bigs in Blue" program is a national initiative aimed at recruiting law enforcement officers to serve as mentors to youth in their communities. These mentoring relationships can help children develop into confident adults while also helping to build stronger bonds between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The "Power Through" program will focus on children who have been impacted by Long Island's opioid epidemic. This program will offer support by matching impacted children with a caring adult mentor who can serve as a positive role model in their life.

"We want to thank County Executive Steve Bellone and his team for taking the time to learn more about our mentoring programs and Donation Center during their recent visit to our Islandia office," said Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island CEO, Mark Cox. "It was an exciting opportunity to share with them the different ways BBBSLI continues to make a positive impact throughout Long Island".

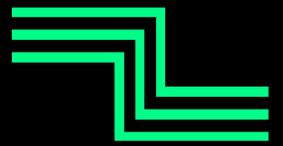
These new programs have created an increased need for BBBSLI to find volunteer mentors. During a meeting County Executive Bellone had with BBBSLI staff members, they explained to him how it only takes a few hours a month for a Big Brother or Big Sister to open a world of possibilities and opportunities for a child, simply by being a consistent friend.

Becoming a mentor is an empowering opportunity to change a child's life and give back to your community. Apply to become a Big today! Visit: <https://bbbsli.org/become-a-big/>





Holiday for Kids' Sake



Thanks to the generous support of 156 individuals along with multiple companies and organizations, this year's program created magic for more than 350 children across Long Island! 100% of the children were sponsored, receiving all the items on their holiday wish lists. We received donations of more than \$30,000 in cash and gift cards. We were also fortunate to have 52 volunteer drivers, along with their family and friends, who delivered presents and food gift cards to over 150 families. Special thanks to Dantona Industries, Inc. and Capital One for sponsoring the food and Stop & Shop gift cards for all the families.



Photos of Littles opening their Holiday for Kids' Sake gifts on Christmas morning

"Thank you so much for all the wonderful gifts . Your generosity made a difficult holiday season so much brighter for all of us!" - Mother of BBBSLI Little

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

GINA CONTALDI, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, INDIVIDUAL & FOUNDATION GIVING

Gina Contaldi recently joined BBBSLI as Director of Development, Individual & Foundation Giving, following 15 years in fundraising and special events at Long Island Children's Museum. Prior to her career in the non-profit sector, Gina worked as a freelance Producer of television commercials for 21 years. Gina currently lives in Long Beach and has three grown sons.

What is something you plan to bring to your position? *I plan to help organize and grow our donor base so we can expand our impact on children and our communities. There are many generous people and organizations across Long Island and by raising awareness of the importance and effectiveness of mentoring, I hope to increase support for our work.*

What is the best part of your job? *The best part of my job is collaborating with the great team of dedicated professionals at BBBSLI. The best result of my job is helping children. Seeing those bright-eyed, happy little faces is priceless!*

What personality trait helps you succeed in your job? *I need an arsenal of traits! Patience and perseverance is a must. Building relationships is a time-consuming process with a great deal of following up required and there can be many declines to swallow.*

If you could pick one superpower, what would it be? *Healing. There is so much hurt and pain in the world.*

What's a fun fact about you that not many people know? *I like to sing out loud in the car and at home but everyone around can't help but know. I love the beach, gardening and yoga.*





UPCOMING EVENTS



CEO

Mark Cox

Chief Financial Officer

Helen Liriano

Director of Development, Individual & Foundation Giving

Gina Contaldi

Director of Development, Corporate & Event Giving

Meredith McCaslin

Director of Programs

Fabiola Turner

Director of Human Resources

Carmelina Vassallo

Senior Manager of Marketing & PR

Amy Sledz-Sarin

Senior Quality Assurance Manager

Josephine Todisco

External Program Relations Manager

Messiah Gaymon

Program Managers

Lauren Laurore

Kelly McGowan

Gabriella Ramirez

Grants Manager

Heather Hanson

Special Events Manager

Chrissy Mahoney

Senior Match Support Specialist

Amanda Jackman

Match Support Specialists

Anjelica Battiste

Alyssa Bloom

Amanda Clyburn

Kerry Duperval

Maria Jaramillo

Ashley Murphy

Enrollment Specialists

Rosemary Cardenas

Jasmine Collazo

Shoana Juin

Recruitment Specialist

Michael Oliveri

Program Assistant

Wilmer Sabala-Bonilla

Newsletter Editor

Amy Sledz-Sarin

www.bbbsli.org



Big Brothers Big Sisters.
OF LONG ISLAND

POKER NIGHT

Presented by

Suffolk Federal
Better Banking For Long Island

Tuesday, March 3rd

The Main Event - 1815 Broad Hollow Road, Farmingdale, NY
Registration 6 p.m. | Cards Dealt 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 3rd

Presented by

Suffolk Federal

The Main Event,

Farmingdale, NY



Big Brothers Big Sisters.
OF LONG ISLAND

COMEDY NIGHT

Presented by

VICOM ProServ

Wednesday, March 11th

Governor's Comedy Club | 90 Division Ave, Levittown, NY
Doors Open at 6:30 pm for Networking Cocktail Hour
Show begins at 8 pm (Food is available for purchase at show)

Wednesday, March 11th

Presented by

VICOM ProServ

Governor's Comedy

Clubs, Levittown, NY



Big Brothers Big Sisters.
OF LONG ISLAND

CATWALK FOR KIDS

FASHION SHOW

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6TH

Lord & Taylor
GARDEN CITY, NY

Wednesday, May 6th

Lord & Taylor

Garden City, NY

VISIT: BBBSLI.ORG/UPCOMING-EVENTS